DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 475 403 CE 084 816

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TITLE	Making a Difference: Leading and Managing for Quality Improvement in Adult and Community Learning.
INSTITUTION	National Inst. of Adult Continuing Education, Leicester (England).; Learning and Skills Development Agency, London (England).
SPONS AGENCY	Department for Education and Skills, London (England).
ISBN	ISBN-1-85338-845-9
PUB DATE	2003-00-00
NOTE	62p.; Part of the Adult and Community Learning Quality Support Programme.
AVAILABLE FROM	Learning and Skills Development Agency, Regent Arcade House, 19-25 Argyll Street, London W1F 7LS, United Kingdom (Ref. No. 1324, free). Tel: 020 7297 9000; Fax: 020 7297 9001; Web site: http://www.lsda.org.uk/home.asp. For full text: http://www.lsda.org.uk/files/PDF/1324.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrators; *Adult Education; *Community Education; Diversity (Student); Economically Disadvantaged; Educational Administration; *Educational Quality; Equal Education; Information Management; Leadership Responsibility; Leadership Training; *Management Development; Nontraditional Students; *Program Administration; *Program Improvement; Strategic Planning
IDENTIFIERS	*United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

This guide looks at demands on leaders and managers in adult and community learning (ACL) in the roles and issues they face in the context of quality improvement (QI). It suggests practical approaches for improving the quality of provision for adults. The guide's design builds on current practice toward the desired state of excellence in all aspects of leadership and management. It starts with information about the current context of the QI agenda. Five sections then address these issues leaders and managers face: strategic management, managing quality, managing equality and diversity, governance and supervision, and managing resources, information, and data. Each section begins with expectations leaders and managers need to fulfil. A statement of current practice follows that is drawn from discussions with providers and feedback from inspection. "Actions for Improvement" suggest ways of moving the agenda on. Practical activities are provided throughout the text to reinforce understanding and stimulate reflection. In particular, Activity 4 can be extended to cover all the expectations in the guide. The final section adds some observations on leading for QI to reinforce some key messages earlier in the text. Appendixes include 19 references and annotations of 3 texts for further reading. (YLB)

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making a difference

leading and managing for quality improvement in adult and community learning

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adult and community learning
quality support programme

The Adult and Community Learning Quality Support Programme is a 3-year programme to support ACL providers to meet quality requirements of inspection and funding agencies and improve their provision. It is run by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) in partnership with the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) and is funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Details of the programme, extra copies of this guide and back-up materials are available on the website www.qualityACL.org.uk

These guides are currently available:

- *Curriculum leadership in adult learning*
- *Equality and diversity in adult and community learning: a guide for managers*
- *Fit for purpose: self-assessment for small providers*
- *Involving tutors and support staff in the adult and community learning quality agenda*
- *Learning in progress: recognising achievement in adult learning*
- *Listening to learners*
- *Observation of teaching and learning in adult education: how to prepare for it, how to do it and how to manage it*
- *Self-assessment and development planning for adult and community learning providers*
- *Using quality schemes in adult and community learning: a guide for managers.*

Further guides and workshops are planned on:

- making sense and use of management information systems
- staff development for quality.

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Published by the Learning and Skills Development Agency

www.LSDA.org.uk

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Registered with the Charity Commissioners

Copyeditor: Karin Fancett
Designers: Dave Shaw and Tania Field
Cover illustrator: Joel Quartey
Printer: Blackmore Ltd, Shaftesbury, Dorset

1324/03/03/3000

ISBN 1 85338 845 9

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to members of the ACL Quality Support Programme team – David Ewens and Annie Merton; the FPM Managing Better team – Kevin Ford, Jenny Mayor and Deirdre Walle; Anne Armstrong of Hounslow LEA; Chris Minter of Kensington and Chelsea LEA; Margaret Hunter of Warwickshire LEA; Chris Pilditch of Gloucestershire LEA; and Patrick Freestone of Mary Ward Centre, London.

Introduction

This guide is aimed at adult and community learning (ACL) practitioners who have a role in leading and managing others. Many people think of leaders as those at the head of an organisation but leadership is a role that all tutors, facilitators and guidance workers have in relation to the groups of people they work with. We talk of 'classroom management' and the leadership role teachers have in relation to students. Leadership occurs at all levels within an organisation. This guide is for those in *organisational* leadership and management roles. In ACL this means those who work with and through colleagues to deliver learning opportunities for adults. It will be of particular interest to heads of adult education services, quality managers, tutor organisers and curriculum leaders. It aims to complement an earlier guide in the series, *Curriculum leadership in adult learning* (Nashashibi and Watters 2003).

The quality of leadership and management in ACL is judged by improved outcomes for learners and local people. These will not be just 'learning outcomes' but also whether learning opportunities in an overall programme are:

- in the right places
- at the right times
- at the right prices
- with the right content
- in the right styles of delivery
- with the right support.

Getting all these things right is a challenge because of a number of factors that make ACL different from other parts of the learning and skills sector.

On the demand side, ACL programmes alone funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) account for 1.7m learners across England in rural and urban settings. ACL learners and other stakeholders (eg the government with its national basic skills, widening participation and other targets) demand a wide curriculum offer, with very specialist courses available in many areas.

Participation in ACL is voluntary and course length is variable. Courses can be short drop-in sessions or tasters, 1-hour or 1-day events and part-time courses over a number of years.

On the supply side, learners' needs are met in a wide range of settings in the same area, from colleges to village halls to community centres and schools (the average number of settings per local authority is about 70!). In addition, learners work most closely with a predominantly part-time work force, whether tutors, outreach workers or curriculum organisers, many of these working for a number of organisations at the same time. Much learning provision is delivered through a range of internal and external partnership arrangements, subcontracting or grant aid. Many of the most innovative projects are funded from a variety of sources with performance criteria set by different funders.

This guide is subtitled 'leading and managing for quality improvement' and therefore concentrates on specific ACL quality issues and solutions. The phrase 'leading and managing' recognises the 'doing' aspect of being an ACL leader and manager. It is an active role that is constantly changing and developing as the learning and skills agenda develops nationally and locally.

How to use this guide

This guide is designed to build on current practice towards the 'desired state' of excellence in all aspects of leadership and management. It starts with information about the current context of the quality improvement agenda. Each subsequent section begins with expectations leaders and managers need to fulfil. These are drawn from the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) updated guidance on the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) section on leadership and management (ALI 2002a). There follows some statement of current practice drawn from discussions with providers and feedback from inspection. 'Actions for improvement' suggest ways of moving the agenda on. Not all the actions will apply to all leaders and managers in ACL but many will be useful. Practical activities are provided throughout the text, to reinforce understanding and stimulate reflection. In particular, Activity 4 (page 18) can be extended to cover all the expectations in the guide.

The final section (Your role as a quality leader) adds some observations on leading for quality improvement to reinforce some of the key messages earlier in the text. Some readers may wish to start there!

The quality improvement context

Success for all

The current quality improvement context is best considered with reference to *Success for all* (DfES 2002a, 2002b). This national strategy framework, to be jointly delivered by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Post-16 Standards Unit and the LSC, has four strands.

Strand	Content	Lead responsibility
Meeting needs, improving choice	**Area reviews** of LSC-funded provision with the aim of ensuring that a wide range of **excellent provision** is available to meet the needs of learners, employers and communities	LSC
Developing a framework for quality and success	Increased investment, institutional **targets**, floor targets for 'success' and recognising and rewarding **excellence**	LSC
Putting teaching and learning at the heart of what we do	Identifying and disseminating **best practice** in teaching	DfES
Developing the teachers and leaders of the future	Taking forward the proposed post-16 '**leadership** college' project as well as ensuring teachers have access to qualifications and continuing **professional development**	DfES

Source: Cabinet Office Strategy Unit 2002, page 62

Within the context of the second strand cited above, *Success for all* (DfES 2002a, 2002b) clarifies the responsibilities of providers and governmental bodies in ensuring high quality post-16 provision.

Who...	...does what?
Providers	...have the primary responsibility for improving the quality of provision
	...are expected to establish and sustain a culture of continuous improvement, based on self-assessment and development planning
Learning and Skills Council	...is responsible for defining quality and success measures
	...is to be relentless in demanding high quality provision and that learners and employers are satisfied with it
	...will intervene in inverse proportion to success
Inspectorates	...are to provide rigorous independent inspection against a Common Inspection Framework for all providers in the learning and skills sector.

Source: DfES 2002a, page 21

Providers

Responsibility for delivering the improvements in performance across the sector and supporting the delivery of the [Success for all] strategy will rest with providers.

DfES 2002b, page 47

The self-assessment process, leading to self-assessment reports (SARs) and quality improvement development plans (QIDPs), is the way providers meet their quality improvement responsibilities. For further details see Kenway and Reisenberger (2001) and Ravenhall *et al.* (2002a).

Providers' approaches to self-assessment need to be fit for their own organisational purposes but there are a number of common features. Self-assessment should:

- be evidence-based
- be linked to national inspection and monitoring frameworks
- be honest and specific, with clear and meaningful judgements
- lead to QIDPs that prioritise those actions which have the greatest impact on the learner
- involve staff, learners and stakeholders
- constitute a dialogue with local LSC officers.

Those managing the self-assessment process and producing SARs and QIDPs need to take these factors into account. They should pay particular attention to how they manage internal and external environments in the self-assessment context (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Self-assessment and the internal and external environments

Self-assessment	Internal environment	External environment
Reporting and communication	Do you communicate your findings to staff or across teams in an appropriate format? Is it summarised in reports to committees, governors and trustees?	Is the report presented in a format appropriate to its target audience? Is there a summary version for learners, employers and other stakeholders? Is it summarised in your strategic documents, such as LEA Adult Learning Plans? Do you publish press releases to celebrate your successes?
Involving key people	Are staff fully involved in the self-assessment process? Are staff fully informed? Do you produce a quality manual that outlines everybody's roles and responsibilities? (see Ravenhall *et al.* 2002b, pages 30–31)	Do you have regular discussions with your local LSC over quality issues and expectations for inclusion in the SAR? Are they involved in supporting areas for improvement identified and costed in the QIDP?

Activity 1 Outline key parts of the self-assessment process and consider how the external and internal environments have an impact on them

Key part of self-assessment process	Impact of internal environment	Impact of external environment

Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

The national office of the LSC produces a Quality Improvement Strategy that outlines its role in improving provision across the learning and skills sector. This overall strategy includes national approaches to reviewing the performance of providers, and support for local staff undertaking reviews.

Performance review is a continuous monitoring process to which ACL providers will be subject during 2003/04. An internal local LSC panel meets twice a year and awards a 'category' to a provider. Panels make judgements on the basis of existing evidence providers are expected to produce as a matter of course (as part of their own quality improvement processes) and records of visits to providers by local LSC officers. They consider evidence where available from inspectorates – such as reports of inspections, reinspections or progress in meeting requirements of a post-inspection action plan. Inspectors do not attend the panels. Besides arriving at a category of overall performance, panels also identify priorities for improvement, and make recommendations on agreed actions providers need to take (LSC 2002a, page 9).

There are three headings for performance review, each with specific performance criteria and indicative evidence sources. Categories are awarded for each of these areas from which an overall category will be given. Performance categories are 'excellent', 'strong', 'acceptable', 'some concerns' and 'serious concerns'. The LSC has published tables that summarise criteria for each category and in each area, targets to be considered and the indicative evidence required (LSC 2002a, pages 15–16).

Because local LSCs have responsibility for planning and funding provision in their geographical areas they need to know what they are purchasing in terms of quantity and quality.

In terms of quantity, they need to know:

- how many learners you provide for
- for how long
- their background (geographical, age, ethnicity, disability status)
- how many people approach your service for information, advice and guidance
- how many do not enrol
- where learners progress to.

Circular 02/04 (LSC 2002b, paragraphs 22–37 and Annex B) began the consultation process on the proposed content of the individualised learner record (ILR) for ACL providers.

In terms of quality, they need to know that you:

- have sound financial management
- provide value for money
- ensure equality and systematically monitor this within robust quality assurance processes
- plan for improvement by knowing where you are and where you realistically can be
- have evidence of learners' views, and their attendance, retention and achievement.

A key task for leaders and managers is therefore to ensure that evidence is in place and represents an accurate picture of the service you provide.

Actions for improvement

- Plan to build up a strong working relationship with your local LSC Quality and Standards team. Their role is to help you be successful.
- Make sure there are 'no surprises' in performance review terms.
- Work together on improving the quality of services to learners in your area.
- Plan inspection together and involve local LSC officers in your evaluation of inspection and relevant staff development events.

Inspectorates

The key role for inspecting ACL lies with the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). The ALI has a wide remit, from adults in further education to work-based learning to UfI to ACL. The main tool used by the ALI in carrying out its work is the Common Inspection Framework (CIF). The CIF asks seven key questions.

1. How well do learners achieve?
2. How effective are teaching, training and learning?
3. How are achievement and learning affected by resources?
4. How effective are the assessment and monitoring of learners' progress?
5. How well do the programmes and courses meet the needs and interests of learners?
6. How well are learners guided and supported?
7. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

As well as the CIF itself, the ALI updated guidance on the CIF (ALI 2002a) is highly relevant to the key expectations identified for ACL leaders and managers.

Providers are likely to be inspected on a 3–4 year cycle, with reinspections within this period where necessary (eg if a provider gets a grade 4 or below for leadership and management). Inspection reports will be in the public domain and made available to local LSCs to inform the performance review process.

As the CIF is written largely in terms of impacts on learners (and local community stakeholders and employers) the inspection process is based on:

- direct observation of learning situations
- interviews with learners, individually or in groups
- interviews with staff with direct contact with learners
- interviews with community stakeholders
- analysis of direct evidence of learner achievement
- observation of other interactions with community stakeholders and learners
- examination of documentary evidence.

Inspectors will aim to triangulate evidence by asking, observing and studying information from a variety of sources (see Ravenhall *et al.* 2002a, page 24).

During the inspection process one inspector will lead on 'leadership and management' and coordinate that element of the report. Reports are publicised in a common format that summarises key strengths and weaknesses, other improvements needed, and the evidence base for each section. Teaching and learning are graded 1–7. Areas of learning (curriculum or programme areas) are graded from 1 to 5. Leadership and management is graded 1–5, with two contributory grades for quality assurance and equality of opportunity.

Contributory grades are awarded after the main grade for leadership and management. It is possible to get a grade 2 for both quality assurance and equality of opportunity and an overall grade 1.

Inspection reports are published on the ALI website. When reading these you will find that leadership and management issues are raised in each section, but are summarised in their own section. The leadership and management section comes after the summative sections and follows the format outlined below.

1. Heading and grade for leadership and management.
2. Introductory descriptive paragraph on the way the provider is organised.
3. Strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed, as bullet points.
4. Paragraphs on general leadership and management findings.
5. Heading and contributory grade for equality of opportunity.
6. Paragraphs on equality of opportunity findings.
7. Heading and contributory grade for quality assurance.
8. Paragraphs on quality assurance findings.
9. Good practice box (if appropriate).

Actions for improvement

- Regularly visit the ALI website (www.ali.gov.uk) and download any reports that look relevant and a list of inspections.
- Identify ACL providers with good grades for leadership and management and note how these have been achieved.
- Compare the reports with your self-assessment of your own leadership and management.
- Search the site for other references to leadership and management and related issues.
- Keep a reference file.

Providing evidence of quality improvement

Leaders and managers have a role not just in improving their service but proving what is taking place.

A useful tool for developing and assessing evidence for leadership and management, whether for your SAR, performance review or prior to inspection, is the CIF itself. The first six sections of the CIF focus on curriculum in the wider sense and how learners are supported in their learning. Although key question 7 focuses on 'leadership and management' (ie 'how effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?'), there are leadership and management issues in each of the other key questions.

Activity 2 Analyse questions 1–6 of the CIF for references and links to leadership and management

Go through the CIF and look for leadership and management in all the key questions.

	Question in the CIF	References (implicit and explicit) to leadership and management
1	How well do learners achieve?	
2	How effective are teaching, training and learning?	
3	How are achievement and learning affected by resources?	
4	How effective are the assessment and monitoring of learners' progress?	
5	How well do the programmes and courses meet the needs and interests of learners?	
6	How well are learners guided and supported?	

Question 7 of the CIF has five sub-elements. In assessing the quality of your service's leadership and management, inspectors will evaluate:

- how well leaders and managers set a clear direction leading to high quality education and training
- how effectively, through quality assurance and self-assessment, performance is monitored and evaluated and steps taken to secure improvement
- how well equality of opportunity is promoted so that all learners achieve their potential
- where relevant, the extent to which governors or other supervisory boards meet their responsibilities
- how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money.

The following sections look at each of these themes in more detail and explore general issues of curriculum leadership and management (see also Nashashibi and Watters 2003).

Strategic management

Expectations

In the new quality improvement context, the purpose of good strategic leadership and management is that it leads to 'high quality education and training' (ALI 2002a, page 21). Success is judged in terms of outcomes for learners and other stakeholders. This is shown in the primary and secondary sources inspectorates use to form a judgement (see page 8 above). These sources will be similar to the ones you use for your own continuous improvement processes, such as self-assessment and development planning.

The updated guidance on the interpretation of the CIF (ALI 2002a) clarifies what is required of providers. It lists criteria for making judgements about the quality of leadership and management. In considering the extent to which 'clear direction is given through strategic objectives, targets and values that are fully understood by staff, including subcontractors and work placement providers', there are a number of expectations.

Expectation 1 you have a clear rationale for your provision that fits with the priorities expressed within your wider and related strategy documents.

Expectation 2 if you subcontract to other providers, the contractual arrangements clearly set out whom the provision is intended to serve, what it is meant to accomplish and on what scale.

Expectation 3 if you make provision via an 'external institution' (ie a freestanding organisation within the LEA), powers are delegated appropriately to enable the external institution to fulfil its task.

Expectation 4 if you work with partners outside the education sector, you ensure they have a mission statement and plans which also reflect their educational aims.

Expectation 5 staff who work in or with your organisation, including those delivering contracted-out provision, understand and work to further the organisation's aims and objectives for ACL.

Expectation 6 your local community understands your organisational purpose.

Expectation 7 your priorities are supported through responsible financial management.

Source: ALI 2002a, pages 21–22

There are increasingly high expectations of *strategic planning* in ACL, both in terms of the quality of a strategic plan itself and the processes that go into its creation and use as a 'living document'. The plan should define organisational mission, set out strategy and describe action plans in relation to:

- analysis of local need
- recognition of national priorities
- review of how successful previous planning had been.

The plan should also address how progress against the objectives will be monitored, how risk will be factored in, and how statutory requirements will be met.

This requires leaders and managers in ACL to *think strategically* in order to link what they plan to do with what they will actually deliver. This involves:

- defining a purpose for the organisation
- setting priorities and aims
- writing a strategy

- communicating the strategy
- undertaking business planning on how to deliver
- delivering, monitoring, reviewing
- adapting future strategy.

Strategic thinking is much more than having a 'strategic plan', whether for a particular funding stream or for the whole organisation. It is also about *strategic reach* – how far your organisation supports and influences others locally, and the partnerships you are involved in and how they contribute to learner success. It is about your sense of direction and your plans for coping with external change in order to deliver future learning opportunities to adults.

Activity 3 Strategic thinking and communication

Develop a list of practical examples of your strategic thinking and how this has been communicated with stakeholders and groups inside and outside your organisation.

Example of strategic thinking	How it has been communicated

Practice

Because nationally it is not always clear what ACL is, providers find it challenging to define the purpose and strategic direction of their organisations at a local level. For those that are part of a wider local authority, for example, corporate priorities and objectives will influence those of the ACL section, however it is described.

For those providers that work in partnership through consortia or subcontracting arrangements there is the additional challenge of defining a common mission and communicating it to staff who are line-managed by different organisations. Communicating and sharing a mission or purpose with associated values is a major task for any organisation.

For providers working across large geographical areas and with many different venues, communities and users the challenge is significant.

Working in partnership or across a large area presents further challenges in terms of strategic thinking. How do you collect key stakeholders' views, incorporate them into your draft documents and consult further? Once the strategy is set, how do you communicate this with all staff and involve them in reviewing it? If you or one of your partner providers is undergoing reorganisation, how do you adapt to ensure a consistent or improved service to learners?

Those providers that subcontract, or provide grants to other organisations, may not always be clear about why they are working in that way. Implementing robust systems for subcontracting stating clearly what learners and each party will gain from the arrangement is not straightforward. Do the mission, priorities and processes of the wider organisation (local authority or head office) get in the way of effective subcontracting arrangements at provider level?

Working in partnership, across a large area, or as part of a corporate body, can present financial management issues. Contracts may not specify level of audit information from subcontractors. Where you work through a local authority (or similar) finance system, you may not have immediate access to financial planning information in the format you require it to inform strategy.

Actions for improvement

- If you are not sure how good your strategic plan is, compare it with others. All statutory plans are in the public domain and can often be accessed through websites. You'll get ideas about presentation and how clearly they communicate purposes to 'outsiders', as well as good ideas for curriculum development.
- If you are part of a local authority, ensure LEA officers and elected members know about the emerging quality agenda, the requirements of the LSC, the CIF and that it is the LEA that is inspected. Provide briefing and training as needed.

- Review LEA and corporate strategic objectives/priorities and note how your service is contributing to these and where you can contribute in the future. Scan the environment for development opportunities (cultural and arts strategy/policy, employee development schemes, basic skills for council staff, Learning at Work Day and other promotions).
- Review all contracts and delegated responsibilities to ensure that they are up to date and cover all requirements.
- Ensure that contracts are clearly detailed to indicate what is to be undertaken and by whom. Contracts and service-level agreements should specify the criteria you have to meet as an organisation. You can specify that learners, staff and other stakeholders are told that learning programmes are supported and conform to your values and standards.
- Manage allocated funds through an effective financial management system which can report on the budget position as required through central and local cost centres.
- Review your mission/purpose statement to see if it describes effectively what you do (see Figure 2). Examine how it is communicated with your own staff and in relationships with partners and other providers.

Figure 2 Example of good practice:
Kent Adult Education Service's (KAES) purpose statement

KAES established the following purpose statement in 1997:

Enabling adults and their communities to succeed and develop through learning.

It is still up to date and can be used to address key issues identified in the CIF and national/local targets. It is also simple to remember and about the core business of ACL.

- Find out if your local authority uses organisations like MORI to research views of customers on services. If it does, make use of such a survey to find out about understanding of ACL by users and non-users. Alternatively, look at how you can gather such information through your own resources and networks.
- Use the budget management expertise of local authority accountants to support and meet ACL needs.
- Check out how you can use Standards Fund support or other local LSC funding to aid actions that require additional resources. Ask your local LSC if they have resources to help you.

Activity 4 Matching your leadership and management practice to expectations

Use the following table to establish the current position in your organisation. See what key colleagues can contribute. This process constitutes evidence that you are thinking through key quality issues as they affect your provision.

Key to grades

Your standard in relation to the expectation is:

1 excellent
2 good
3 satisfactory
4 unsatisfactory
5 very unsatisfactory

Expectation (see page 14)	**Estimated current grade (between 1 and 5) for your organisation**	**Issues to address (if grade awarded is below 2)**	**Possible solution(s) (if grade awarded is below 2)**	**Actions to achieve solutions**
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

Note

This template can be applied to all the expectations in the subsequent text.

Managing quality

Expectations

The CIF asks 'how effectively, through quality assurance and self-assessment, performance is monitored and evaluated and steps take to secure improvement' (ALI 2002a, page 21). It is a key role of ACL leaders and managers to ensure monitoring takes place, evaluative judgements are made and actions taken. Targets are set as part of the provider's overall strategy in order to ensure continuous improvement.

Providers are judged in terms of 'the extent to which quality assurance arrangements are systematic and informed by the views of all interested parties' (ALI 2002a, page 22). In practice this means there are a number of expectations of leaders and managers in ACL.

Expectation 8 your quality assurance arrangements are rigorous and designed to suit the size and nature of your organisation.

Expectation 9 if you subcontract, you have established arrangements for evaluating the quality of subcontractors' provision, and ensured that these are implemented.

Expectation 10 if you have delegated provision to a partner provider, each party has a clear understanding of their respective responsibilities for assuring quality.

Expectation 11 learners and other agencies in the local community have a voice in evaluating the quality of your provision.

Expectation 12 part-time tutors, voluntary and support staff, as well as full-time paid staff, all understand and participate in your quality assurance arrangements.

Expectation 13 you plan for continuous improvement on the basis of the strengths and weaknesses you identify through the self-assessment process.

Expectation 14 if you subcontract provision, or delegate it to an external institution, you have responsibility for ensuring that self-assessment is coordinated and carried out across all providers.

Expectation 15 if your subcontractors have little experience of self-assessment, your organisation has a responsibility to support them with the process.

Expectation 16 you regularly review your performance in relation to targets relevant to the needs, interests and achievement of adult learners.

Expectation 17 you strive continuously to improve your performance, and report on it regularly to the appropriate managing body or commissioning agent.

Expectation 18 you set appropriate and comprehensive targets for improvement. (The LSC's performance review framework gives illustrative targets under three key performance areas. These are summarised in Figure 3.)

Source: ALI 2002a, pages 22–23

Figure 3 Targets in the LSC's performance review framework

Participation and recruitment
from the first point of contact to enrolment/start

Relevant key targets expressed in the self-assessment report and development plan and business/strategic plan: enrolments/starts; widening participation recruitment targets; equality and diversity recruitment targets; recruitment targets relating to local and national council initiatives (eg Local Initiative Fund projects, Bite Size); initial guidance.

Learner experience and performance
from induction to completion/achievement

Relevant key targets expressed in the self-assessment report and development plan and business/strategic plan: retention rates; achievement rates; learner health and safety/induction and safe learner; equality and diversity; progression/destination; learner satisfaction; employer satisfaction; take-up of learners and effectiveness of learning support (eg basic skills); take-up of practical learner support (eg access funds, transport); teacher/trainer qualifications and continuing professional development.

Management
the systems, procedures and processes underpinning delivery of the provision

Management of targets expressed in the business/strategic plan and self-assessment report/development plan: financial targets relating to LSC funding; staffing; curriculum range; statutory duties – equality and diversity, learner health and safety.

based on LSC 2002a, page 8

Practice

Quality assurance in ACL is often characterised as having many instances of good practice but only a developing sense of consistent approaches and an overall framework. Systems, processes and procedures for checking the results of identified actions can be inconsistently applied. Systems for target-setting and the use of performance indicators, particularly in relation to learners' performance, are sometimes not sufficiently embedded. Schemes for recognising and recording learning achievement and progression, particularly outside accredited provision, are often at an early and developmental stage. Teaching staff may not fully understand the purpose of such schemes and how they link in with general processes for course evaluation.

Many ACL providers have limited experience of self-assessment and development planning and only one year's experience of using the CIF as a basis for it. Initial feedback from ACL pilot inspections suggests that SARs are not sufficiently robust at this stage, with particular challenges experienced in the collection of evidence to support judgements. Where learning provision is secured across a wide area or through subcontracting arrangements there may not be common and consistently applied processes. This may result in relatively few staff, and fewer learners, being actively engaged in the self-assessment process. Sometimes links are not explicit between the SAR, the QIDP, strategic plans and any accompanying business plans.

For large ACL services and those providers that subcontract there are further challenges in gaining commitment to an LEA-wide self-assessment built up from local reports.

Actions for improvement

- Be familiar with the targets required and performance categories of LSC against the three performance areas. Check ones you already set. Develop with colleagues a staged implementation plan for introducing others. Share with all staff.
- Review the capacity of your management information system to meet the requirements for both internal and external data collection and reporting.
- Ensure staff are aware of the importance of quality data to analyse performance.

- Develop skills in setting appropriate targets against key performance categories.
- Establish regular data reports at all levels to inform on progress in meeting targets.
- Use local information from the 2001 Census to review district and ward data that can be used to monitor local provision and performance.
- Consider buying software that uses postcode analysis to show you how you are doing locally against widening participation targets, equality and diversity targets and other indicators such as levels of deprivation.
- Develop a quality framework that makes clear what is to be monitored/reviewed, when and by whom.
- Set service standards for all areas of work that can be owned and used by staff appropriately. Once you have established standards, ensure that processes are in place and happen to monitor implementation.
- Adopt a 'right first time'/'customer focused' culture in which fixing mistakes is the norm.
- Establish a key group to have oversight of quality assurance with a regular reporting framework. This can be across organisations as well as within them!
- Establish an annual timetable for quality assurance activities so that staff know when key actions should be undertaken. Ensure that this is integrated within your annual calendar of activity rather than operating outside it.
- Use an external framework to help identify where you need to set service standards. The PQASSO system is a good place to start as it has categories and example standards that fit well within ACL. Another is the 'Excellence model'. See the previous guide in this series, *Using quality schemes in adult and community learning: a guide for managers* (Ewens and Watters 2002, pages 26–30) for further information.
- Build into job descriptions and contracts for all staff key quality tasks or standards that individuals are expected to meet.
- Use front-line staff to 'problem solve' mistakes/errors/issues that recur. People who are involved in delivery usually have solutions to problems that come up regularly, but they are often not asked for their ideas.

- In working with community organisations and contracting providers develop a quality risk assessment process to ensure that specified requirements are being met. See Figure 4 for how Lancashire LEA approaches this task.
- Bring providers together to train and gain commitment to common approaches to self-assessment.
- Establish a shared moderating process between providers or curriculum areas for grading and agreeing strengths and weaknesses.
- Note any local LSC guidance on how to present SARs and build improvement and development of the self-assessment process to meet your own organisation's development needs and external guidelines. Find out if your local LSC is using a checklist to evaluate SARs and ask for information on this and feedback on your SAR and QIDP.
- Regularly monitor the QIDP to ensure that strengths and weaknesses identified through self-assessment are being addressed by target dates.
- Review the self-assessment process annually to check what worked well and what not so well. Ensure that this review is not forgotten once the SAR has been completed. Take action to implement any recommendations for improving the process.
- Look again at our earlier guide in this series, *Self-assessment and development planning for adult and community learning providers* (Kenway and Reisenberger 2001). There are sections on training and communication (page 12), LEAs that secure provision through contracts (page 13), involving staff (page 22), moderating and validating (pages 26–28) and reviewing the process (page 37).
- Update and develop feedback arrangements for learners and groups that ask key questions giving evidence you require. Figure 5 outlines Newcastle LEA's approach to learner satisfaction.

Example of good practice

Lancashire LEA has developed a model for use with voluntary and community organisations that gives quality requirements on the initial funding application form, enabling identification of where the organisation currently is and what developmental support it may need. Review of this is built in through monitoring visits. See Figure 4 for the Lancashire quality checklist.

Figure 4 List of headings used in quality risk assessment by Lancashire Adult and Community Education Service

Do you have/ make use of...	Tick if evidence available/seen		Comments
Equal opportunities policy	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Health and safety policy	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Investors in People status	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Staff development policy	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Annual development plan	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Audited accounts	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Annual report	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Annual self-assessment procedures	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Access for learners with disabilities	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Accommodation fit for purpose	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Resources fit for purpose	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Qualified staff for learning delivery	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Pre-employment police record checks	Yes ☐	No ☐	

Do you have/ make use of...	Tick if evidence available/seen		Comments
Information advice and guidance processes	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Needs analysis of learners	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Individual learning plans	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Individualised learner records	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Feedback from learners	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Progressing learners	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Use of volunteers	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Training for volunteers	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Other observations/ comments			

Figure 5 Example of good practice:
Newcastle LEA's learner satisfaction survey

During spring 2002 Newcastle LEA Adult Continuing Education Service developed a new learner satisfaction survey and sampled a range of learners.

Nine statements were used to analyse the whole service and each provider by level of satisfaction.

- There was sufficient pre-course information given for me to make a decision on the right programme.
- The enrolment process was handled smoothly and quickly.
- The teaching at the centre was good.
- The content of the course met my expectations.
- The tutor assessed my work well.
- Where appropriate, equipment and materials were suitable for the course.
- Any complaints I had were handled efficiently.
- I have acquired new knowledge and skills as a result of attending this course.
- I was given information and guidance on further courses suitable for me.

A 60-page report was produced from the survey detailing responses to each statement and by each centre delivering provision. Five key recommendations were identified.

- The service needed to investigate teaching materials so that upgrading them could be prioritised and resourced.
- Learners should be provided with improved course information prior to enrolment so that they could make an informed choice.
- Externally assessed work should be returned to learners within one month.
- Learners should receive relevant information on further courses to help them progress.
- The service should conduct a follow-up report into learner satisfaction in order to measure improvements to the service.

Managing equality and diversity

Expectations

For a general look at managing equality and diversity in ACL and the current legislative frameworks see Reisenberger and Dadzie (2002). Specifically concerning leadership and management, section 7 of the CIF outlines the need for 'explicit aims, values and strategies promoting equality for all that are reflected in the provider's work'.

Expectation 19 you promote equality of opportunity through effectively widening participation, targeting under-represented groups, developing an inclusive curriculum, acknowledging diversity in the learning situation and recruiting a diverse workforce.

Expectation 20 you regularly analyse learners' participation, retention, achievements and progression against equal opportunities categories.

Expectation 21 if you subcontract provision, or delegate to an external institution, you have a responsibility for monitoring performance against equal opportunities categories as part of the process of implementing your own equal opportunities policy.

Expectation 22 you have policies and codes of practice to tackle harassment on grounds of gender, race/equality, age, class, mental health, disability and sexual orientation.

Expectation 23 you train staff to enable them to deal with harassment.

Expectation 24 you respond to complaints and grievances promptly and effectively, using procedures that are understood by staff and learners.

Source: ALI 2002a, page 25

Practice

Although all providers have some sort of policy statement, the CIF challenges providers to keep it up to date with current legislation and the needs of learners. Sometimes overarching policies are not translated into formats readily understood by learners and those wishing to access learning. It is sometimes not clear who is responsible for implementing the policy and who oversees this implementation.

Some providers have developed a specific training strategy for equal opportunities with key objectives and guidelines on support, monitoring and evaluation. This includes templates for monitoring the effectiveness of training through seeking the views of trainers and learners. Tutor handbooks often provide guidelines on teaching specific groups, layout of materials, general information on understanding social inequality and glossaries of key terms. Take-up of training opportunities presents challenges across a largely part-time and dispersed workforce. Monitoring may not be systematic to assess reach of new training initiatives and enable planning for higher levels of participation.

Disability statements are widely used but not given as a matter of course to all learners. Subcontracting learning providers may not employ consistent materials and approaches with learners so that learners are not being given equal opportunities.

The growth in widening participation activities in recent years aimed at attracting those learners traditionally under-represented in adult learning presents challenges to leaders and managers in ACL. Needs analysis tends to be more sophisticated than ongoing monitoring of take-up and destination of learners. Overall analysis of participation rates from targeted groups, at course and individual levels, can be patchy. Targets tend to be set at organisational level.

The range of specialist facilities available varies between providers. Despite the growth in provision, specialist ICT facilities for visually impaired learners, including large-print facilities, large screens and adapted keyboards, are less readily available across the sector. The access to premises for learners with mobility difficulties varies. The availability of resources to support people with limited mobility is stated in disability statements but links with strategies for improving the situation are often unclear.

Not all ACL providers make childcare available, and other support for learners varies between providers, often as the result of historical funding and budgeting.

The monitoring and evaluation of equal opportunities promotion and practice is at an early stage of development. There may be little analysis of recruitment of staff (including managers) from ethnic minority groups or groups with specific disabilities and the impact on recruitment of learners from such groups. Data and management information collected at a local level are not analysed on a service-wide basis. Marketing and publicity materials are often not evaluated in terms of their role in ensuring equality of opportunity for potential learners.

Feedback and complaints procedures are not common in all providers, and are not regularly reviewed. Dealing with and recording of complaints tends to be more thorough and applied consistently.

If quality issues are designated as the responsibility of one member of the management team, the danger is that equality and diversity are sidelined rather than 'embedded' and 'mainstreamed' into an organisation's activities. Although it is good that time and resources are allocated to ensuring specific issues are addressed, the best practice gives priority to addressing equality issues at all levels. Is it a standing item on management agendas? Is it a question that is asked at the initiation stage of new projects? Are leaders good and effective role models in terms of their practice? There must be a 'witting' as well as an 'unwitting' approach to equality and diversity so that it is not a question simply of paying lip service. For leaders, as well as everyone else in an organisation, this often means developing a new mindset which goes beyond policies, monitoring and impact and deals with how organisations can be run differently while maintaining efficiency and effectiveness.

Actions for improvement

- Use the audit tool provided in the earlier guide in this series, *Equality and diversity in adult and community learning: a guide for managers* (Reisenberger and Dadzie 2002, pages 36–40), to identify where you need to prioritise action and training.
- Find examples of best practice from other providers, which you might be able to adapt and use.
- Translate legislative requirements appropriately to all aspects of delivery (see Reisenberger and Dadzie 2002, pages 41–43).
- Where you have a committee or group on equality look carefully at who has responsibility for leading it. You give out a clear message if it is the head of service.
- Ensure that policies are up to date, in circulation and in use.
- Ensure you are on target with Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) (2001)? requirements and have said in statements what you can do.
- Prioritise training on all equality and diversity issues.
- Be a role model for best practice at all events and meetings by considering what equality and diversity issues apply and deal with them initially and throughout.
- Make sure retention and achievement data is available against target groups.
- Benchmark your local participation, retention and achievement against ward and postcode information.
- Set targets on participation that reflect your community (eg ethnic minorities, people who are disabled).
- Look at your staff profile and prioritise appointments that also reflect the community you serve. Note if there are gaps in certain areas (eg among part-time tutors, administrative staff, senior management) and aim to recruit those who are under-represented.

Activity 5 Equality and diversity: how do you measure up?

Search www.ali.gov.uk for ACL and other inspection reports that get a grade 1 for leadership and management (eg Mary Ward Centre, which was inspected in autumn 2002). Look at the section on equality of opportunity. List what the provider is doing well and record how your provision measures up.

For example, here is the good practice of a small, charitable-sector provider:

...diversity monitoring has been introduced. On a designated 'polling day', all those entering Apex respond anonymously to a detailed questionnaire. Data identifies the personal, ethnic, and gender-related diversity of those contacting Apex, and highlights problems of discrimination. The survey also includes specific questions to identify any unintended discriminatory practices. The data are reviewed at director level and immediate action is taken with identified problems.

Source: ALI 2002b, page 9

Example of good equality of opportunity practice from ALI inspection report	**How do you measure up?**
1	
2	
3	

Governance and supervision

Expectations

The relevant CIF criterion states that 'governors or other supervisory boards effectively oversee the provider's strategic direction, and regularly monitor the quality of provision and their own performance'.

Expectation 25 your management committees and cabinet members regularly request and receive reports on all key aspects of your performance.

Expectation 26 if you delegate the delivery of provision to an external institution, the powers of the governing body to determine strategic direction are clearly set out in a memorandum of agreement.

Expectation 27 if you subcontract provision, the nature of the provision clearly relates to the LEA's strategic priorities.

Expectation 28 your LEA's elected members and senior managers evaluate their own performance in enabling providers to deliver a service which fulfils the authority's strategic goals.

Expectation 29 if you are an independent organisation, your management committee or partnership board evaluates its own performance as well as that of the organisation.

Source: ALI 2002a, pages 22–23

Practice

Recent years have seen a number of changes in the way ACL is funded and administered. The modernising public services agenda has resulted in new arrangements for ensuring public accountability. In addition, the statutory duty of local authorities to secure ACL has changed. One of the challenges for ACL leaders and managers is in managing this change so that key groups and individuals remain informed about the work of the provider and its partners.

Across the ACL sector there is a wide array of governance arrangements, some well established and some less so. Inspection and external monitoring is designed to ask whether these arrangements are either still 'fit for purpose' or in the process of becoming so (in the light of legislative and other changes), ensuring high quality education and training for adults and local people.

Actions for improvement
for LEAs and organisations delivering ACL provision by contract

- Review current arrangements and see if they are 'up to expectation'
- Determine whether a governing body will 'add value' and consider arrangements if you do not have one in your management structure.
- Clarify reporting arrangements with the titular heads of LEAs or organisations providing ACL. Inform them of what is expected of them and their own accountability, confirming the position in writing.
- Report regularly with copies of your SAR and QIDP, including executive summaries.
- In reporting arrangements to governing bodies, include evaluation and recommendations against LEA strategic goals, enabling elected members to endorse action and/or to consider recommended actions.
- Involve governors and those in similar roles in self-assessment and other quality assurance processes. Build this into the annual quality assurance cycle to enable review by the governing body or LEA against strategic priorities and responsibilities.
- Attend meetings of partner organisations as a member or adviser and update them on strategic issues and other relevant matters.

Activity 6 Governance and management: do you meet expectations?

List the expectations in this section (expectations 25–29, see page 33) down one side of a sheet of paper, and grade your performance against the following criteria on the other side: 1 = fully meets criteria to 5 = meets no aspects of it. Then list possible improvements alongside these. Share your ideas with a colleague. Think about strategies for improving the situation.

Expectation (1–5)	Grade	Improvements	Strategy to deliver improvements

Managing resources, information and data

Resources are what your organisation uses to achieve its goals. A broad definition is used here and encompasses:

- physical resources and fixed assets, such as capital goods and buildings
- financial resources, such as cash assets or reserves
- human resources, such as staff, their knowledge and expertise
- information resources, such as data and business intelligence
- partnership resources, such as the 'value-added' by working with others.

This section looks at how leaders and managers deploy this wide range of resources.

Expectations

Question 7 of the CIF 'examines the arrangements for the management and delivery of adult and community learning. It examines how roles and responsibilities have been allocated to ensure that provision meets the needs and aspirations of individuals, groups and communities in a rapidly changing social, economic and technological environment' (ALI 2002a, page 21).

The CIF asks providers about the extent to which 'staff appraisal or review is effective in improving the quality of provision'.

Expectation 30 staff performance review arrangements are appropriate to the nature and size of the providing organisation, and take account of the needs of part-time as well as full-time staff.

Expectation 31 you have provided good opportunities for employee development and career progression.

The CIF is clear on the role of leadership and management in relation to resources and information. In terms of resources providers are asked 'how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money.'

Expectation 32 you scrutinise your running costs regularly with a view to operating cost-effectively.

Expectation 33 you balance the possibility of generating fee income against commitments to widen participation.

Expectation 34 you attempt to make full use of directly managed premises to encourage community participation.

Expectation 35 you are aware of the unit costs of different aspects of your provision and use these to inform judgements about the viability of provision.

Expectation 36 you have partnerships or links with other agencies and organisations which further community-based learning.

Expectation 37 if you delegate responsibility for service delivery to an external institution, the memorandum of agreement specifies which party deals with human resource issues.

Expectation 38 your staff make effective use of 'best value' information to secure resources and services at competitive rates.

Expectation 39 you review your financial position regularly and make use of projections that link with your planning processes.

In the chapter on strategic management we outlined the general expectation around the financial management of your organisation and how it links to your planning processes (expectation 7).

Here are some further expectations around financial resource management.

Expectation 40 your decision-making is informed by clear and accurate financial information.

Expectation 41 your financial processes are transparent and responsibilities are clearly allocated.

Expectation 42 if you subcontract to other providers, the financial basis is clearly specified.

Expectation 43 if you delegate to an external institution, the service-level agreement specifies which party is responsible for each management function and the level of financial resource for each.

The CIF also asks about the extent to which 'the information needs of managers and other staff are met and management information is used effectively to the benefit of learners'.

Expectation 44 you use management information to gain insight into a wide range of issues including the appropriateness of particular patterns of provision, the effectiveness of equal opportunities strategies and the quality of provision.

Source: ALI 2002a, page 25

Practice

In terms of physical resources and fixed assets, such as capital goods and buildings, ACL providers have the constant challenge of ensuring facilities are 'fit for purpose'. Where specialist space is not available, this must be recognised and key issues addressed. One of the criticisms in pilot ALI inspections of ACL was that there were courses taking place in inappropriate venues. Sometimes the use of a venue undermined health and safety (unsprung floors, children's chairs) to the extent that providers were not fulfilling their duty of care to their learners. The pilots recognised the need to balance the positive factor of geographical accessibility with the negative one of poorly equipped venues. Strategic plans required by the LSC now ask for some forward planning regarding accommodation use. Capital bids are dealt with separately from the strategic planning process.

Financial resources are generally efficiently managed by local authorities, but changes to the funding structure have meant increased scrutiny of the level of overhead top-sliced by the whole authority and how funding streams merge in practice to benefit learners. Depending on the size of the provider's budget base, issues with suppliers and over cash-flow are not normally serious, as they tend to be underwritten by the whole authority. However, some local authority owned premises could be seen to be vulnerable as venues for ACL because of changes in strategic priority, or in the case of LEAs acting as their own insurers.

ACL is a 'people business', so the successful deployment of human resources is essential to a provider's success. Most of the cash resource is spent on staff. Almost all interaction with the learner is through the tutor or course leader. Many of the judgements inspectors and others will make about the quality of your service will be based on observation of and interviews with your staff at work. Another criticism levelled in ALI pilot inspections in this area was the failure of managers to deploy staff in curriculum teams. Such teams are considered in most instances to be the most appropriate way to deliver learning opportunities. Successful curriculum leadership is seen as a means of translating quality assurance processes such as observing of teaching and learning (OTL) to quality improvement processes such as staff development, job coaching and mentoring. Curriculum organisation also allows the provider to approach self-assessment in a systematic way. Lack of it could account for criticisms about a lack of robustness in process and follow through with all staff. Some inspection reports also point to the lack of performance management of staff, such as ongoing supervision and appraisal.

Information resources, such as data and business intelligence, are reasonably well developed, but generally under-used for aspects of management activity. Data is collected and stored, used for enrolments, financial reconciliation and claiming funding. But it is used less successfully as a bank of knowledge to inform planning.

Partnership is a common activity in the sector, but it is rarely seen as a resource to be mobilised to achieve an organisation's goals. Those LEAs that subcontract have a more keenly developed sense of the value that can be added by working in partnership. Partnership activity has particularly had an impact on providers' approaches to widening participation.

Actions for improvement

- Link your accommodation strategy to your QIDP.
- Develop community partnerships to support the aims of all providers. Publish a partnership compact.
- Instigate a health and safety audit cycle for all premises and resources whether they are directly owned and managed by you or not.
- Benchmark, where you can, against similar providers to compare cost-effectiveness.
- Benchmark internally across similar provision to check your own practice and variations. (For more on approaches to benchmarking see Owen 2002.)
- Develop quality risk criteria against facilities and resources in each curriculum area and venue. Have minimum standards for each course and level.
- Train staff in the interpretation and use of data to inform planning and decision-making.
- Prioritise recruiting and/or training staff to input data as needed.
- Champion and develop the annual self-assessment and development plan process to provide a focus for quality improvement. An example of how you might enable tutors to self-assess themselves is given in Figure 6.
- Build in regular systematic appraisal of individual and team performance. Set clear guidelines and implement them from the top down to provide a role model of good practice. Don't ask staff to do something you are not prepared to do yourself.
- Use common structures to achieve the above that include:
  - links to strategic priorities/targets/development plan actions
  - a common format that all use for recording notes/actions
  - a standard meeting agenda format with items that appear each time and others that are regularly scheduled or given special time for development
  - time to step outside the normal meeting agenda to reflect on how well you are working together (eg some team training or development activity).

- Use team development training to get the best out of all members of a team and to aid understanding of when things are not going well and why. (See the note on Belbin (1981) in the References and further reading section, page 57.)
- Develop a communications schedule that supplies all staff with appropriate information. Make it interesting, with regular features which provide information needed in a way that those receiving it can use in their role.
- If you have the resources, assign someone to provide a regular update on circulars and documents on LSC (www.lsc.gov.uk), ALI (www.ali.gov.uk) and other helpful websites.
- Develop your own intranet as another way to develop internal information sharing.
- Review the meetings that are taking place in your service. Hold meetings but make them relevant, well managed and achieve a precise purpose. Do not have meetings because 'we always have one every week'.
- Identify some common structure or ground rules for meetings such as:
  - an agreed format for agendas and notes of meetings to aid shared reading and to help focus on what needs to be done
  - including standard items such as reporting on actions, training, development plan progress, as needed
  - avoiding the introduction of 'surprise' items of which team members have no previous knowledge
  - applying some key questions to each item, such as 'what will be the impact on teaching and learning?' or 'what difference will this make?'
  - setting time limits for discussion where possible
  - setting and keeping to start and finish times
  - deciding where the meeting should take place (can you rotate the location, and what might you gain by doing this?).

Figure 7 gives an example of how good practice can be achieved in the context of 1:1 meetings, but the principles can be generally applied.

Figure 6 Staff development: tutor self-assessment

This questionnaire is designed to provide an indication of your understanding of the key issues that support teaching and learning. There are no right or wrong answers and judgements on your ability are not being made. Over the next year we will provide you with help and advice on how to guide and assist students with their learning. This might be through further communications, by providing an opportunity for training or by meeting and sharing ideas. Your completion of this questionnaire will help prioritise action. Please tick one box for each question using the statements below. As a guide we anticipate that you will have one or more ticks in box 4.

1 I have a very good understanding of how to...

2 I have some understanding of how to...

3 I would like some updating on how to...

4 I need to know much more about how to...

	1	2	3	4
Plan courses and lessons	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use initial assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Motivate and maintain student interest	☐	☐	☐	☐
Meet students' individual learning needs	☐	☐	☐	☐
Identify additional learning support needs	☐	☐	☐	☐
Record and check learners' progress	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give advice and guidance to students	☐	☐	☐	☐
Judge the level and pace of sessions	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vary learning methods and styles	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give opportunity for student participation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Get the best use of facilities and equipment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning	☐	☐	☐	☐

Figure 6 continued

	1	2	3	4
Develop my subject competence/expertise	☐	☐	☐	☐
Manage equal opportunity issues	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maintain high attendance and retention	☐	☐	☐	☐
Encourage and support student achievement	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provide information on progression routes	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please add any additional comments here

If you have a particular request for help and advice that is not covered by the statements in the questionnaire add it here.

If you have an example of good practice that you are willing to share or something that has helped you in teaching or with students' learning please also add it here.

Please indicate what and where you teach. Giving your name is optional but could help.
Location(s)

Subject(s)

Name

Please return to by

Figure 7 Good practice features of a 1:1 line management meeting

The meeting:

- is a private, face to face discussion between the post holder (PH) and line manager (LM)
- reviews issues identified by the PH and LM and includes:
  - actions from the last meeting to be followed up
  - review of development plan actions and individual PH targets
  - training and development needs
- is structured, not a casual chat
- includes discussion about past, present and future
- produces specific actions with deadline dates
- has results that are recorded in writing in a prepared format (doing an action note as you go will save time writing up outside the meeting)
- includes a date for the next scheduled meeting.

1:1 meetings should be seen as a priority and rarely postponed.

Activity 7 Audit your resources

Look at the expectations section on pages 38–39. Make your own list of 'resources', splitting them into those that meet and those that do not meet expectations.

Resource category	Meets expectations	Does not meet expectations
Financial		
Physical		
Human		
Information		
Partnership		

List the actions you need to take to develop your resource base

Your role as a quality leader

What is quality leadership?

Leadership and management are not synonymous or interchangeable terms. Thinking about them separately is useful in that it will help you develop appropriate approaches in your work. Kotter outlines the following distinctions.

Activity	Leadership	Management
Creating an agenda	Sets direction; develops vision and strategies to achieve vision	Plans and budgets; establishes detailed steps and timescales to achieve results; allocates resources
Developing a network for achieving the agenda	Assigns people to do things; communicates vision and strategy to all those whose cooperation may be needed	Organises and staffs; sets up structures; delegates authority for implementation; develops policies and procedures; creates monitoring systems
Executing	Motivates and inspires people to overcome major political, bureaucratic and resource barriers to achieve the vision	Controls and solves problems; monitors results against plans
Achieving outcomes	Produces change sometimes of dramatic nature; may create disorder but also new ideas and products	Produces key results expected by various stakeholders; creates predictability and order

Source: Kotter in DuBrin 1995, page 4. Quoted in *'Managing better' resource pack*, FPM/NIACE 2002

Know yourself

Just as we might expect tutors to know something about 'learning styles' and 'initial assessment' and how these can be helpful in developing teaching and learning, leaders and managers need to develop professional skills for the roles they are currently undertaking or may undertake in future. You could begin to identify the skills you might need by the following means.

Self-assessment – by completing a personal skills inventory or questionnaire on leadership style or any of a range of tools that are available to help you understand more about yourself (your strengths and weaknesses) and how you do things now. This is also appropriate and available for team assessment and evaluation.

- **A personal or team development plan** to gain skills and develop working practices that help achieve the results that individually or together you identify as critical for success. Training for improvement will be a key element in the plan.
- **Evaluation and review** by building in regular feedback and review either in line-management meetings or with a mentor.
- **Team review** looking at what is working well and not so well is a good way to start, though it can often be more challenging than other activities. Many teams use an external facilitator when they are confident and can trust the process of looking critically at blockages and problems.
- **Benchmarking good practice** or learning from others who have been successful. How have they done it and what are the necessary ingredients for success?

Leadership style

Leadership style is how you behave when you are trying to influence the performance of someone else.

Blanchard 1994, page 46

Successful leaders use a variety of approaches, depending on whom they are working with. This may depend on context – whether a 'follower' is line-managed by you, is your boss, or works for another organisation entirely. It also depends on the competence (at the task in hand) of the follower. Most texts refer to four approaches that exist on a continuum:

Directing ⟶ Coaching ⟶ Supporting ⟶ Delegating

Directing
...involves clearly telling people what, how, where and when to do a task, then closely supervising them as they do it

Coaching...
involves elements of both directing and supporting

Supporting...
involves listening to people, providing support and encouragement, and then facilitating their involvement in decision-making

Delegating...
involves turning over responsibility and day-to-day decision-making

Source: Blanchard 1994, pages 46 and 56

It is important to adopt the correct leadership style to avoid poor quality performance. An example is delegating when an individual is not ready for it (sometimes referred to as 'dumping'). This may result in work being done to a lower standard or not being done on target.

Activity 8 Leadership style applied to people and situations

Think about people you work with and which leadership style you should adopt with them in order to meet your organisational goals. Decide which approach is the best for each situation and stick to it. Remember you can demotivate colleagues by delegating work and then taking it back off them.

Person and situation	Leadership style and justification

Functional leadership

A leader is a person who is appointed to achieve results with and through other people. In other words, he or she has a task to perform, using people. Adair 1988, page 40

Effective leadership derives from a leader always considering three fundamental elements when taking action. Adair (1988, page 40) describes these as the need to do the following.

- **Achieve the task** This need is not only important for its own sake. The morale of the group will hang on its fulfilment and the degree to which each person in the group shares the sense of achievement that results.
- **Develop individuals** Each person in a group has a need to develop and satisfy a wide range of motivational requirements, including achievement, growth, social and belonging needs.
- **Build a team** The effect of high team spirit derives from a real community of purpose. Such a team spirit produces synergy – a high level of task achievement – and morale which is supportive of its own members.

Adair identifies that these three fundamental areas of task, team and individual leadership are interdependent and insufficient consideration of any area will have an adverse effect on the others.

Activity 9 Achievement through leadership style

Reflect on an achievement in your organisation that has come about as a result of the three areas above being present, balanced and critical to its success. Use this as an example to help overcome other issues and challenges you may be facing.

Achievement in organisation	How it came about through task achievement, individual development and team-building

Total quality leadership

To achieve total quality managers must become leaders, drawing from their people their greatest capacity to contribute ideas, creativity, innovative thinking, attention to detail and analysis of process and product to the workplace.

Covey 1992, pages 264–265

Total quality leadership is a phrase coined by Covey that builds on total quality management (TQM). Leadership is seen as the 'glue that holds total quality together' (Covey 1992, page 261).

A description of TQM in the context of ACL can be found in Ravenhall *et al.* (2002b, pages 15–24).

TQM systems usually refer to 'health checks' as tools for reviewing practice. The SAR can do this annually and lead to further 'health checks' on specific issues for improvement, if needed, in the QIDP.

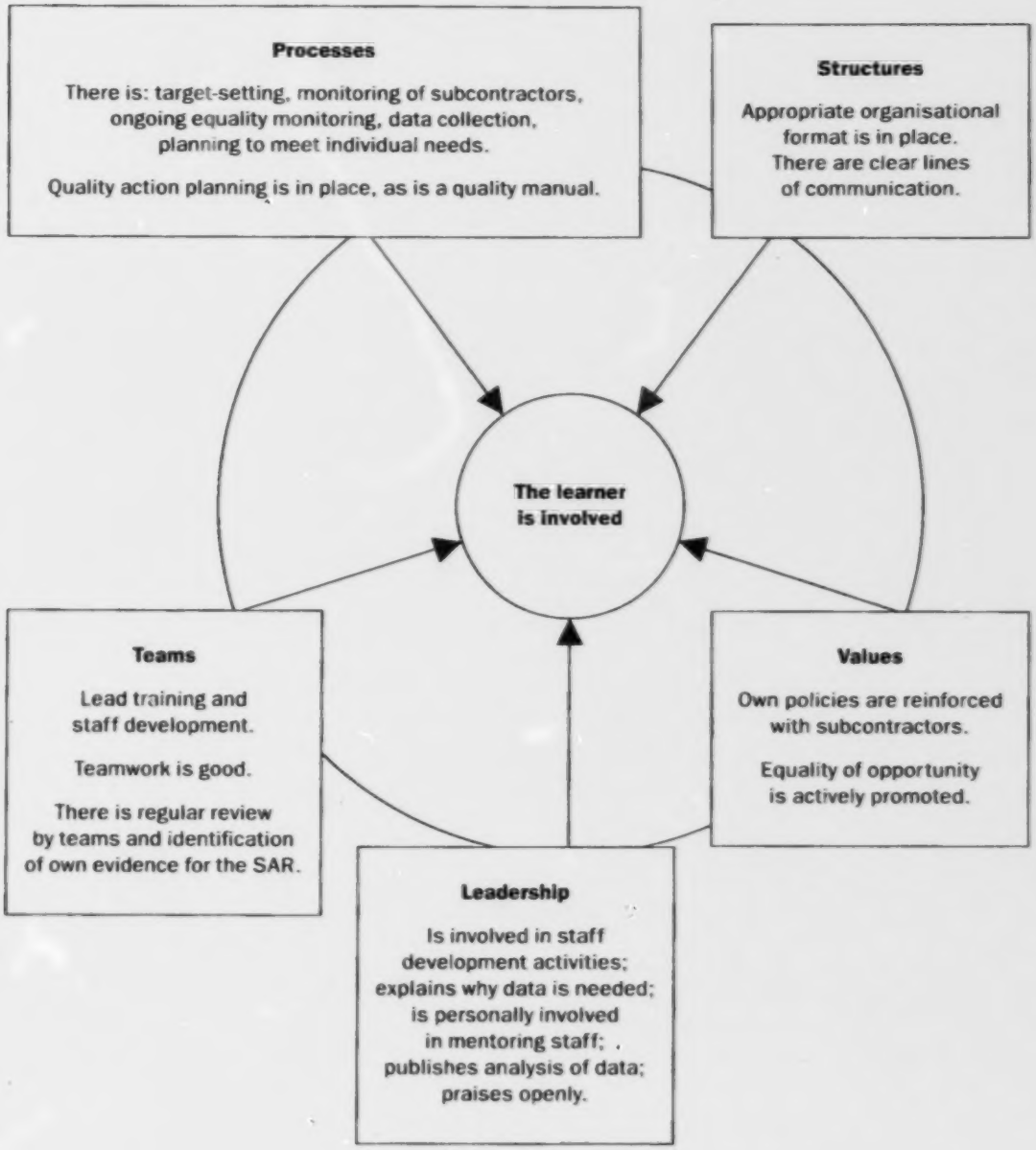
TQM is often drawn with the customer at the heart of a model that includes processes, systems, values, teams and leadership. The model states that these elements should be considered as having an impact on the learner's experience of provision. An analysis of inspection reports where providers received a grade 1 for leadership and management bears this out.

Good leadership can be shown in the context of quality improvement in many ways. Figure 8 gives some examples, while Figure 9 gives characteristics of excellence drawn from published inspection reports.

Figure 8 Good leadership and quality improvement

Situation	Leadership approach
A group has achieved a high pass rate in an examination course	You make a point of visiting the group. If you pass the group's tutor in the corridor, you stop her and comment on the group's success. You look at ways of celebrating the success of the group, and consult with the group as to what they think is the best way of doing this
There are low levels of satisfaction with the quality of the refreshments in evening centres	You make a point of having a break with the learners in these centres. You ask them what they think about the service and how it could be improved. You talk to the staff about ways the service could be improved
One of your curriculum leaders is struggling to meet one of her targets	You arrange a meeting with her to discuss how you can assist in the achievement of the target in the short term. You help identify longer-term support measures with her
After the first round of SARs teams contributing had difficulty in providing evidence for strengths and weaknesses and reaching an appropriate grade	You review the process with them, discuss what help they might need, and enable outside facilitation and training to be available

Figure 9 Some characteristics of excellence drawn from published inspection reports


Processes
There is: target-setting, monitoring of subcontractors, ongoing equality monitoring, data collection, planning to meet individual needs.
Quality action planning is in place, as is a quality manual.
Structures
Appropriate organisational format is in place. There are clear lines of communication.
The learner is involved
Teams
Lead training and staff development.
Teamwork is good.
There is regular review by teams and identification of own evidence for the SAR.
Values
Own policies are reinforced with subcontractors.
Equality of opportunity is actively promoted.
Leadership
Is involved in staff development activities; explains why data is needed; is personally involved in mentoring staff; publishes analysis of data; praises openly.

Conclusions

The quality of leadership and management in the learning and skills sector is under the spotlight. High expectations have been set in terms of a revised inspection framework, self-assessment and the quality improvement development planning process. There have been general legislative changes in the areas of equality of opportunity and funding which have had a specific impact on the ACL agenda. Other forces of change include the rate of technological development and how this will affect both curriculum demand and the way learning is delivered. Leaders and managers will be judged by how well they respond to such forces and plan ahead for effective learning opportunities for adults.

References and further reading

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Further reading

There are many helpful texts available on leadership and management. The three given below are a good starting point for those who have not studied them before and a reminder for those who might like to revisit them.

Action-centred leadership
detailed in John Adair, *Effective leadership*, Pan, 1988.

This approach is about keeping a balance of focus between task, team and individual for effective leadership. A questionnaire is available 'Personal leadership profile', which enables you to assess where you are in relation to the three elements. Profiles can be purchased from LPT Productions (tel 01828 640770 or e-mail sales@lptproductions.com) at a cost of £4.25 + each p&p.

Situational leadership II
is detailed in Ken Blanchard, *Leadership and the one minute manager*, HarperCollins, 1994.

This concentrates on leadership style and developing individuals. While you may have a preferred or mostly used style there is a need to adapt this to fit the situation. The four leadership styles are Directing, Coaching, Supporting and Delegating, and they need to be applied to fit the level of competence and commitment of individuals (followers).

A self-assessment questionnaire provides perceptions of your own leadership style and identifies your Primary, Secondary and Developing style. This questionnaire is available, along with other supporting material, from Ken Blanchard Companies (tel 020 8540 5404) at a cost of £6.50 + p&p.

Team roles
are detailed in R. Meredith Belbin, *Management teams – why they succeed or fail*, Butterworth-Heinemann, 1981.

This is a very well-known work on team roles and how a balance of these is required for a team to be effective. There is a self-perception inventory in the guide but there is also now available an interactive IT pack known as eInterplace. This is a human resources management system and is available direct from Belbin Associates in Cambridge (e-mail info@belbin.com). As well as self-perception and an interpretation of this in the form of a personal profile, the pack enables perceptions of others who you work with to be taken into account and can comment on the strengths and weaknesses of a team of up to 15 people.

adult and community learning
quality support programme

Demands on leaders and managers in adult and community learning have never been greater. This guide looks at what is required of them in these roles and what issues they are facing in the context of quality improvement. It suggests practical approaches for improving the quality of provision for adults.

ISBN 1 85338 845 9

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